



SHASTA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WEIGHTS AND MEASURES WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER

High Risk Pest Interceptions in Shasta County – 2022

The Shasta County Department of Agriculture (SCDA) regularly conducts inspections of plant material and nursery stock moving through parcel handling facilities such as Fedex and UPS. Parcels moving through these facilities are delivered throughout the north state to locations in Shasta, Tehama, Trinity, Siskiyou, and Modoc counties. SCDA staff at these facilities inspect incoming plant material and commodities for the presence of live pests, and to ensure that California entry requirements are being met. Plant material entering into California may be subject to varying phytosanitary requirements and require certification by agricultural officers at their points of origin. Insects, fungal pathogens, and plant viruses endemic to areas outside of California can pose a serious threat to California's agricultural economy, to the natural environment, and can be a general nuisance to the public. The introduction of foreign pests can result in increased food costs and an increase in pesticide use on farms.

During the 2022 calendar year, inspections at parcel handling facilities in Shasta County yielded:

- (77) A-rated pests

A-rated pests are those of known economic or environmental detriment and are either not known to be established in California, or are present in a limited distribution allowing for the possibility of eradication or successful containment. A-rated pests are prohibited from entering the state and have been placed on the of Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services Director's list of organisms "detrimental to agriculture" in accordance with the FAC Sections 5261 and 6461.

A-rated species intercepted during 2022 include the sansevieria scale, mango shield scale, lesser snow scale, boxwood scale, black thread scale, oriental scale, mealybug species *Pseudococcus jackbearsleyi*, *Planococcus minor*, *Ferrisia virgata*, and ant species *Wasmannia auropunctata*

- (217) Q-rated pests

Q-rated pests are those suspected to be of economic or environmental detriment, but its status is uncertain because of incomplete identification due to life stage, or inadequate information on the pest's impact in



Top: A-rated *Ferrisia virgata* (striped mealybug) on guave tree from South Carolina (Image: SCDA)

Bottom: A-rated *Ischnaspis longirostris* (black thread scale), commonly found on cut palm fronds from Ecuador (Image: CDFA)

California. Q-rated pests require a temporary “A” action pending determination of a permanent rating. The majority of Q-rated pest intercepts in Shasta County occurred in the insect families Formicidae, Pseudococcidae, Coccidae, Diaspididae, and Aleyrodidae.

- (8) B-rated pests

B-rated pests are those of known economic or environmental detriment and, if present in California, are of limited distribution. If found in the state, they are subject to holding action and eradication only to provide for containment, such as when found in a nursery. At the discretion of the individual county agricultural commissioner, they are subject to eradication, containment, suppression, control, or other holding action.

- (136) C-rated pests

C-rated pests are those of known economic or environmental detriment and, if present in California, it is usually widespread. C-rated organisms are eligible to enter the state as long as the commodities with which they are associated conform to pest cleanliness standards. If found in the state, they are subject to regulations designed to retard spread or to suppress at the discretion of the individual county agricultural commissioner.

Shasta County has continued to see an increase in the number of pest interceptions found on plant material being shipped into California. This is largely due to the proliferation on online retailers selling items such as cut flowers and foliage, tropical fruits, and potted plants originating from out of state or out of country. All pest interceptions are sent to the CDFA entomology lab for formal identification. Depending on the pest present and the level of infestation, the plant material may be destroyed, reconditioned and released for delivery, or partially released when applicable.

Retail Pricing and Package Inspections – 2022 Recap

During 2022, the Shasta County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures (SCDA) conducted fifty-five price verification inspections at forty separate retail businesses. Retail store sectors inspected include grocery, clothing, hardware, discount, and specialty stores. Four of these inspections were initiated due to of consumer complaints reported to the SCDA office. Follow-up inspections occurred at stores with documented overcharges, and two business locations were issued fines for egregious or repeated overcharges that were not resolved on follow-up inspections.

During these inspections, commodities are randomly selected for a test purchase, and the advertised prices are recorded for each item. The transactions are processed by the cashier and a consumer receipt for the transactions is obtained. The prices on the receipt are then compared to the advertised or posted prices. It is a violation of California Business and Professions Code section 12024.2 to charge an amount greater than the lowest advertised or posted price for that commodity, regardless of any time period for which the posted price is effective.

A total of 1,162 individual items were inspected for price accuracy during these inspections in 2022. Overcharges were discovered on 54 individual items (4%) at 19 retailers (47%), with a combined total overcharge value of \$142.39. Undercharges were also documented, though it is not a violation of the law to charge a price less than what is advertised or posted.

SHASTA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE / WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

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In addition to commodity overcharges, there were 29 overcharges for California Refund Value (CRV) associated with beverage sales documented at 10 different stores. The maximum CRV charge for eligible beverage containers of 24 fluid ounces or less is \$0.05, and \$0.10 for containers greater than 24 ounces, and certain beverages or beverage sizes are exempt from the CRV program. Overcharging for CRV is a violation of California Business and Professions Code section 12024.13. More information on CRV charges can be found at <https://calrecycle.ca.gov>.

The SCDA conducted an additional 5 Package Quantity Inspections consisting of 449 individual lots. These inspections target prepackaged commodities that are packed at the location where sold (meat, deli, and bakery departments) to verify that the net contents labeled on the package matches the net contents physically present. During these inspections, empty packaging material is weighed to obtain tare weights. Packages offered for sale are then weighed, resulting in gross weights of packages. The net weight is calculated by taking the gross weight value and subtracting the tare weight value. This value is compared to the declared net weight on the package label.

Of the 449 lots inspected, 15 lots (3%) were rejected for selling a commodity is less quantity than represented. These lots were held off-sale until the net weight statements were corrected. Additionally, 7 lots of canned vegetables were inspected due to a consumer complaint. These packages were inspected for accuracy of the net weight statement, as well as for non-functional slack fill. No violations of California laws or regulations were found. Procedures for conducting package quantity inspections, including allowable tolerances, are outlined in the National Institute of Standards and Technology Handbook 133. Selling a commodity in less quantity than represented is considered a violation of California Business and Professions Code section 12024.

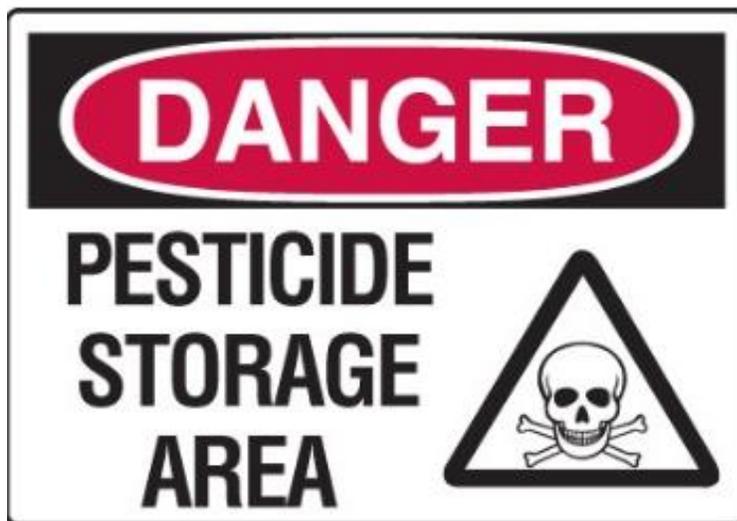
While consumers are well aware of inflation, buyers should also be aware of “shrinkflation” – a decrease in the quantity of the commodity, which is being sold at the same or similar price as the same commodity had previously been sold. Decreasing quantities is a tactic manufacturers may use to avoid the sticker shock consumers feel when purchasing their products. When the quantity of the product decreases but the packing size stays the same, however, this may lead to an excess of non-functional slack fill. Slack fill is the difference between the capacity of a container and the volume of product within the container. Certain reasons for slack fill are allowed. Non-functional slack fill, however, may be a violation of California Business and Professions Code section 12606.2 for misleading food containers.



Pesticide Disposal Event – Spring 2023

Registration Required In Order To Participate

The County Agricultural Commissioner Offices for Shasta, Siskiyou, Modoc, and Lassen Counties will be coordinating a free Pesticide Disposal Event in April 2023 to assist with the disposal of outdated or unwanted pesticides. This collection event is intended for Growers, Pest Control Businesses, Pesticide Dealers, Golf Courses, Structural Pest Control Companies, and Landscapers within these four counties only, and pre-registration for this event is required in order to participate. Empty containers will not be accepted at this event. This event is made possible through funding provided by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation.



Agricultural producers and business wishing to participate should notify the Shasta County Department of Agriculture (SCDA) to pre-register for this event. Pre-registration forms should be submitted as soon as possible, and will require a list of the materials, quantities, and container types expected to be turned in at this event. This information is needed for event planning purposes to get an accurate cost estimate for the disposal of collected materials. Registration for this event is required for SCDA to properly contract with a hazardous materials disposal company, and to ensure that sufficient space is available to accommodate all participants. If the cost estimate for the event is significantly higher than the funds available to collect and dispose of the pesticides, the SCDA may place a limit on the number of participants, or the amount of material one can dispose. Please contact The Shasta County Department of Agriculture at 530-224-4949 or shastaag@co.shasta.ca.us to register for this event. Eligible participants will be notified of the time and place where the disposal event will occur.

This event is not regulatory in any way, and no enforcement action will be taken against participants. The goal of this event is to facilitate the collection of hazardous pesticides by providing a no cost, safe, and legal method of disposal to agricultural producers and businesses. Unwanted excess pesticides, even banned or otherwise illegal-to-use products, are eligible for safe disposal during this event. This opportunity provides a safe and cost-free option for local growers and businesses as the need for proper disposal can be very expensive.

Homeowners with household use pesticides or other pesticides in smaller quantities can utilize the Household Hazardous Waste Facility located at 2255 Abernathy Ln. Redding, CA. Requirements and questions regarding household hazardous waste disposal should be directed to The City of Redding Solid Waste Transfer Station at 530-224-6209, or by visiting [their website](#).

Seasonal Help Positions Available

The Shasta County Department of Agriculture / Weights & Measures continues to solicit applications to fill seasonal extra help positions as an Agricultural Crewperson within the programs of Insect Pest Detection and Noxious Weed Eradication. These positions provide excellent opportunities for individuals to gain experience and make connections with County Agricultural Departments and other fields focused on agriculture and natural resources. Numerous past and current Agricultural Commissioners within the state have started their careers as seasonal trappers at various CAC offices.

While applications can be submitted year-round for extra help positions, the hiring for these positions within the Department of Agriculture typically occurs February – March. Work may begin as early as April and typically continues through October, but start and end dates and daily work schedules may be flexible to accommodate school schedules and individual needs, so all interested individuals are encouraged apply. Applicants are encouraged to read the full job description prior to applying.

To be considered, the individual must possess the following:

- A valid driver's license
- Ability to follow detailed instructions and keep accurate records
- Ability to read / draw paper maps
- Ability to use GPS and iPads for navigation and recording data
- Desire to work outdoors in all weather conditions

Job duties may include the following:

- Driving a county vehicle to place and service insect detection monitoring traps throughout the county in both urban and rural settings, with the primary focus on residential properties
- Driving a county vehicle to rural locations to apply manual or herbicide treatments to eradicate noxious weed populations
- Mix, load, and apply pesticides if assigned to the Noxious Weed Eradication program
- Other duties as assigned

For information on how to apply, please contact the SCDA at (530) 224-4949 or shastaag@co.shasta.ca.us

Changes to Private Applicator Certificates

In 2017, the U.S. EPA revised federal standards to enhance protection to individuals using or supervising the use of Restricted Use Pesticides (RUPs). The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) is the Lead Agency that certifies pesticide applicators using RUPs within California. DPR must ensure that all California state programs and associated regulations detailing the certification of pesticide applicators meet or exceed the federal regulations established by the U.S. EPA.

As a result of the revised federal standards, the licensing program for pesticide applicators is being updated to reflect the new federal standards. The most significant change affecting local growers is the change to Private Applicator Certificates (PAC)

exam. Starting January 1st, 2024, any agricultural producer needing to renew their PAC will be required to pass a new PAC exam. Continuing education hours will not be accepted for renewal until after the applicator has passed the new exam. Updated study material for the exam can be ordered as a hard copy or a digital copy. In addition to the new exam, a new category and exam have been added specifically for the use of fumigants targeting burrowing vertebrate pests, such as rodents. The Private Applicator Certificate will only be available for agricultural use and will no longer be issued for home use.

As a reminder, Pest Control Businesses and Structural Pest Control Operators must register their businesses with the County Agricultural Commissioner's office for the new year. Prior to doing any pest control work, including advertising for services, each pest control business (including maintenance gardeners) must register with each County Ag Commissioner's office in the counties where work will be performed. Restricted Materials Permits and Operator Identification Numbers will need to be renewed as well prior to performing any pesticide work on your property. Appointment to renew Restricted Materials Permits, Operator Identification Numbers, or to take a PAC exam can be made by calling (530) 224-4949

